

### **Basic Information**

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College: McMicken College of Arts and Science

Major: Biology

Title of Project: GlobeMed Grassroots Onsite Work (GROW) Internship

Thematic Area: Global Studies

Expected Project Start Date: May 15, 2014

Expected Project End Date: June 15, 2014

### **Project Information**

1. Provide a detailed abstract of your proposed honors experiential learning project.

GlobeMed at the University of Cincinnati is a student run organization that is committed to raising health awareness locally and combating health disparities abroad. Within the UC community we advocate for a better understanding of common health issues affecting the United States including breast cancer, lung disease, obesity, and heart disease. Locally, we also work with students and business to generate funds to support our international partner Social Action for Women (SAW), a grassroots Non-Governmental Organization. Millions of Burmese natives have been displaced from their homeland and are residing in Thailand. SAW is located in Mae Sot, Thailand and provides support to the Burmese immigrants living in crisis. GlobeMed at UC partners with SAW to provide a Community Health Outreach Program (CHOP) that educates peer leaders within the Burmese community on issues such as maternal health, hygiene, and communicable diseases including skin disease and tuberculosis. Beyond CHOP, GlobeMed financially supports SAW's other programs including the Children's Crisis Center and the Mobile Medical Unit. Our mission is to promote health in the Burmese community so that the immigrants can become productive citizens and avoid the risk of human trafficking and the flourishing drug trade.

I believe that this is the year to go on the GROW internship. If I am to truly participate in, and lead GlobeMed, in the years to come, then I want to do it with a paramount understanding of who our partner is and what their crucial needs are. I believe that GlobeMed can best meet the needs of our SAW counterparts through continued communication, and most importantly, by empathizing with their needs and truly understanding the community, culture, and everyday struggles that they face. This way we will not be giving them a solution that they cannot use, we will be supporting them while the community adapts a health system that is sustainable and effective for their culture. The turmoil caused by over two million Burmese natives immigrating to Thailand poses a unique set of social issues. As a participant in this internship I hope to learn how social barriers in the Mae Scot community, such as religion, language, and ethnicity, are affecting their health. This knowledge can only be acquired through personal interactions and experiences. In addition, I have the particular desire to travel, meet new cultures, and work with individuals who are underserved in the current health care system. The GROW trip is an experience that will allow me to work with individuals whose health is limited by poverty and social injustice.

The GROW internship will consist of a five week trip to Mae Sot, Thailand and Burma. As part of the GROW team, I have a responsibility to actively plan, execute, and reflect on the internship. Planning will begin the first week of December. Each week, the GROW team will meet for a couple hours to work through the details of the trip including vaccinations, housing, airfare, food, passports, busing, and most

importantly our itinerary for the trip. Group discussions before the trip will allow the GROW team to propose ways to prepare for the culture shock when we arrive in Thailand in addition to communicating personal concerns and hopes for the trip. Planning for the trip will also include Skype calls with our SAW counterparts to facilitate relationships before the actual visit. Before departing on the trip I will attend a GROW training in Chicago where I will learn what expectations the national chapter has for the trip.

The internship itself will begin on May 15, 2014. The first two weeks of will consist of experiential learning. I will shadow the various departments of SAW to gain a better understanding of the functional properties of each program. I will learn what it is like to live in a Burmese refugee camp, and how SAW functions within that community. In the final three weeks, I will play a more active role. I will lead classes for the Community Health Outreach Program (CHOP) on hygiene. In addition I will teach conversational English to the students at the Children's Crisis Center. I will also travel with SAW to the local villages to assist the Mobile Medical Unit. Throughout the trip my main focus will be to evaluate the effectiveness of CHOP. I will use statistics to quantitatively analyze who CHOP is affecting, what is their change in behavior, and how long lasting is the behavioral change. Throughout the trip I will keep a detailed journal to document my growth as a global citizen. I will record daily activities, meaningful experiences, and most importantly what social barriers I observe that affect the health of the community. I will also take pictures to upload to my trip blog. I will either update the blog daily while on the trip, given connection to the internet, or I will update the blog immediately upon returning to the United States.

The itinerary is a projection based on the major goals of the trip. As planning progresses, the itinerary will be modified.

May 15:	Depart Cincinnati for Thailand
May 16:	Arrive at Mo Chit Bus Station Depart for Mae Sot via Bus Arrive in Mae Sot and check in at Phannu Meet SAW representatives
May 17- May 31:	Shadow SAW as they perform their daily duties Visit the Tai-Burmese Border Visit the Mae Sot Clinic Visit the Women's Shelter Visit the Children's Crisis Center Visit HIV Clinic Begin CHOP analysis
June 1- June 13:	Begin Rotational Duties Work at the Children's Crisis Center Teach CHOP Visit Burma Visit local villages alongside the Mobile Medical Unit Finish CHOP analysis Buy SAW dinner
June 14:	Depart for Thailand for Cincinnati
June 15:	Arrive in Cincinnati

**Clearly and thoroughly address how each of the following elements will be exhibited in your work:**

2. Connection to Learning Outcomes within the Honors Thematic Area (identified above)

*Interact with individuals from different cultures and express a sensitivity, appreciation and respect for the complex range of experiences of diverse peoples*

The Thai-Burmese culture is radically different from the culture here at the University of Cincinnati. The Burmese immigrants residing in Thailand are living in a blend of both Thai and Burmese culture. Both cultures have different values and social norms as compared to the United States. In Thailand, and Burma, there are over thirty different religions. The most common are Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism. The Burmese speak a different language, have different styles of clothing, experience different levels of education, have different family styles, eat different foods, and most importantly are limited by different social barriers. Poverty in Thailand and Burma is fundamentally different than in the United States, and the flawed healthcare system allows diseases to persist that do not occur in the United States. With such a bounty of variance from my culture, I will be immersed with new cultural experiences at every moment during the internship. Before the trip I will intentionally learn about the social issues affecting Thailand and Burma so that I am well educated entering into the internship. During my internship, I will be working alongside the SAW officials. I will develop personal relationships with these individuals, and I will learn their way of life. Together, we will share meals and celebrate holidays. I will visit temples and centers of commerce. By the end of the internship, their way of life will be familiar to me, and I will have my own personal experiences to add to my understanding of their culture. Within the Mae Sot community I will learn the social customs. The SAW hosts will invite us into their homes, and I will meet their families. I will be able to experience life in Mae Sot in an intimate and personal way.

*Participate in a global society and understand the role of a global citizen*

I believe that health is a human right, and that every person has the right to basic healthcare. As a global citizen it is my responsibility to serve communities that are most deserving. The GROW internship will allow me to act on these beliefs. Every day, for five weeks, I will be working in a third world nation providing health care to individuals in need. However, it is necessary that I enter into the internship with the mindset of service, and not of helping. As a global citizen I need to respect other cultures, and value their way of life. I need to understand that every human being has the capacity for greatness and that each individual has something to teach me. This internship will allow me to learn from the SAW counterparts just as they will learn from me. I will teach the immigrants about hygiene, and they will teach me how to live a simplistic life. I will visit despot communities, but at the same time I will recognize the beauty of the human life that resides within. In a global society, I cannot progress through life ignorant of the needs of others. This internship will teach me the tangible ways that students at the University of Cincinnati can make an impact in Mae Sot, Thailand. I will be use the funding provided by Potbellies on Calhoun Street to implement communicable disease training to the Burmese immigrants.

3. Connection to Goals and Academic Theories (reference list included)

A. In three years, I aim to graduate from the University of Cincinnati with a major in Biology a minor in Art History, and a certificate in Minority Health. I then plan on getting a Masters in Public

Health, concentrating in either Epidemiology or Health Services Management. The following year, I hope to enter into medical school and train to one day become an attending in the Emergency Room. I can later use these skills to participate in Doctors Without Borders, or a similar organization, so that I can practice in the nations and communities that deserve my time and efforts the most. I believe that in order to treat a patient, from any community, I first need to understand the personal struggles that they face. In an urban setting, these might be differences in family values, education, socioeconomic level, and diet. On a global scale, struggles can be very similar and very different to those faced in the United States. The GROW trip will allow me to experience the struggles first hand that despot communities face in cultures that are very different from my own. Many young girls growing up in other nations are faced with struggles such as a limited education, teenage pregnancy, the risk of human trafficking, and inadequate social rights. As a physician, I will need to understand these experiences to treat the patient as a whole, and not as one dimensional physical problem. The GROW trip also enables me to work with a group of health-minded individuals, allowing me to learn how I can best contribute to medical teams in the future. Travel experience in my undergraduate education will allow me to focus my studies while I work toward my Master's, because I will have a personal connection with the communities abroad that I aim to serve. As a physician I will be able to travel back to these communities and continue my service through clinical care.

B. To prepare for the GROW trip I will need to develop a thorough understanding of the health and poverty cycle, health as a human right, and the current social issues in Burma and Thailand. I have chosen the following peer reviewed journal articles to facilitate this learning. I have chosen to learn about the health and poverty cycle because the Mae Sot community has poor health not because of any physical inadequacy, but because of poverty. I want to enter into this internship with a better understanding of how income affects health and conversely how health affects income. In addition, I will explore the theory of health as a human right. This topic seems to be surrounded by controversy. Not only is there debate over the idea of health as a right, but also over the way to implement care. Some support government subsidies support, while other are in favor of NGO support. Understanding the different viewpoints will allow me to further solidify my personal views and also to empathize with opposing opinions. Finally, I will learn about the current conflicts in Burma and Thailand. Knowledge of these issues will allow me to play a more active role in the internship. In addition, these issues will affect my safety while I am there, and it is my responsibility to be informed of any risks.

#### *Reference List*

Lynch JW, Kaplan GA. Understanding how inequality in the distribution of income affects health. *Journal of Health Psychology* 1997;2:297-314

Evans T, Whitehead M, Diderichsen F, Bhuyia A, Wirth M, editors. *Challenging inequities in health: from ethics to action*. New York: Oxford University Press; 2001.

*Macroeconomics and health: investing in health for economic development*. Report of the Commission on Macroeconomics and Health. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2001.

*Health: a precious asset. Accelerating follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development*. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2000. WHO document WHO/HSD/HID/00.1.

Kremb, Jurgen. "Exploiting Thailand's Burmese Refugees: The Children of the Mae Sot Dump." *SPIEGEL ONLINE*. N.p., 2007. Web. 18 Nov. 2013. <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/exploiting-thailand-s-burmese-refugees-the-children-of-the-mae-sot-dump-a-515116.html>

#### 4. Initiative, Independence, and/or Creativity

Throughout the past several years, I have gained substantial traveling experience that I will be able to apply to the GROW internship. Last summer I spent a month traveling throughout Spain, last spring I toured Canada, and a couple summers before I went on a mission trip to Mexico. Each trip allowed me to acquire unique skills. My trip to Spain taught me how to overcome difficult situations while in a foreign country. The first week I was there, my family's rental car was hit. The following days I had to work as an interpreter, with my limited language skills, to allow my family to communicate with the foreign insurance companies. I learned how to be patient when dealing with systems that operate differently from what I am comfortable with. Conversely, I also learned that foreign systems require more persistence to effectively fix the situation. My time in Canada was spent backpacking. This trip gave me experience living with only the bare necessities. For a month I had limited access to plumbing, electricity, and basic products, such as a clean towel. Giving up these luxuries allowed me to travel further into nature, and to experience a simplistic life. While in Mexico, I worked at an orphanage providing both manual labor and faith based programming for the children. I learned that the hard work required to mix concrete, spackle dry wall, and stack bricks, reaped benefits for the orphanage that far outweighed my personal struggle. I was able to share my faith with the community at the orphanage and also to make relationships that are still very important to me. I keep in touch with many of the individuals I met while serving in Mexico, and I hope to sustain these relationships in the years to come.

Additionally, I possess the necessary skills needed to interact with patients and health care providers in the Mae Sot community. Throughout all four years of high school, I volunteered at the Nationwide Children's Hospital. This experience taught me how to serve families that are going through very stressful and emotional situations while dealing with a sick family member. These situations require empathy and a willingness to meet the needs of others. Service has taught me how to place my needs below the needs of others. When patients are sick they deserve my complete cooperation despite how I may feel personally. I will be able to use these skills when working with the GROW team in Thailand, because my comfort and personal desires will be less important than serving the Mae Sot community. During high school I also shadowed physicians at the hospital and local clinics. I understand that being part of a medical team requires delegating responsibility, producing reliable work, and effectively managing time.

Finally, I possess very practical statistics skills. I am currently enrolled in statistics and I enjoy analyzing data to discover trends. I aim to use these skills on the GROW trip to evaluate the effectiveness of the program. CHOP is beginning its third cycle and it is necessary to understand the impact that it has on the Mae Sot community. Statistics will show what response CHOP elicits in the community as compared to the other communities without our programming. We provide a substantial amount of funding, so it is vital to the organization to have concrete evidence of our impact.

## 5. Reflection

I will use reflection throughout the internship to develop and improve both my participation during the trip and my future role as a global citizen. During the trip I will keep a daily journal where I will record the events of the day, my thought and emotions, and the lessons that I learn. I will also take pictures of the internship. Pictures are a valuable medium of reflection because they recall specific memories and relationships. Keeping a daily journal will ensure that I reflect daily. Journaling while I am there instead of waiting until I return is essential because my experiences will be fresh. I will be able to analyze the pros and cons of each day so that the next day will improve. I will also reflect on the cultural observations that I make and on the relationships that I build. When I return to the United States I will upload my journal and pictures to the trip blog. Another main source of the reflection during the trip will be the nightly meetings with the other GROW trip members. We will discuss our concerns, questions, and triumphs of each day. This forthright communication will facilitate collective growth in addition to building support for the other GROW members.

## 6. Dissemination

I will be able to share my experience on the GROW trip in two main ways. The first will be through my participation with GlobeMed in the years to come and the second will be with the University of Cincinnati community at large.

### *GlobeMed*

As a freshman, I have three years to apply the GROW trip experience to my time at UC. I will come back from the trip more passionate about our cause because I will have personal faces and stories to concentrate my efforts towards. I will take a detailed journal of our daily activities that I will then upload to the GlobeMed blog once I am back at UC. This personal account can then be shown to prospective donors and business to give them a more specific example of how their money will be spent, and who it will be impacting. Given the opportunity, I would also like to be part of the evaluation to see how effective CHOP is. As mentioned previously, I am very interested in biostatistics, and an analytical evaluation of the impact that GlobeMed makes would be a very influential piece of evidence to persuade benefactors. It is so important to understand the impact that CHOP has because the health of the Mae Sot community affects much more than their physical wellbeing. I will also use my experiences to enrich the participation of future GlobeMed members. When I joined GlobeMed this fall, I recognized a need for a more in-depth explanation of who SAW is and what specific programs GlobeMed supported in Thailand. I plan to present my trip to future members so that they can relate my personal experiences toward GlobeMed's common goal.

In partnership with the GROW committees in the future, I can use this experience to organize and implement trips in the future. Real experience on the GROW trip will allow me to improve future trips by adapting shortcomings that I experience, and also to further enrich the areas of the trip that were more effective. In partnership with the Partner's Committee I will be able to use the personal relationships that I develop on the GROW trip to more effectively communicate with the SAW counterparts and to anticipate needs that they might have. For example, each member of SAW has

goals for the Mae Sot community, whether they are swimming lessons, literacy training, or raising maternal health. Understanding these unique goals will allow us to combine their vision for the Mae Sot community with any programming and fundraising that happens here at UC. My final goal for after the GROW trip is to work more closely with the women's groups on campus. SAW has a focus on vulnerable women and children and I believe women's groups here on campus are a valuable resource that GlobeMed has yet to take advantage of. The UC Women's Center, The Women's Club of the University of Cincinnati, and the Academic, Administrative and Professional Women's Club possess valuable insight into the social issues that affect women. I will be able to use my GROW trip experience to work with these groups to formulate programming that combines the unique issues in Thailand with what is known about women's issues here at UC. The GROW trip will enrich my following years with GlobeMed.

#### *University of Cincinnati Community*

I believe that the desire for health equality goes beyond GlobeMed at the University of Cincinnati. GlobeMed is part of a social movement, a revolution in the way that students view their role as a global citizen. As the world becomes smaller, and technology advances, an individual here at the University of Cincinnati has the opportunity to create a tangible impact on the opposite side of the globe. Given the privileges that students are blessed with here in Cincinnati, the opportunity to make an impact becomes the responsibility to make an impact. I plan to share my experiences on the GROW trip with the University at large because students need to be aware of the health disparity in Thailand. Knowledge leads to action, and action leads to health equality. I plan to disseminate my experiences to the University community through a variety of pathways. I plan to share my blog via social media website. Students are connected through this medium, and I believe it is an effective mode of communication. In addition I plan to present at the annual GlobeMed open-house at TUC and in the residence hall where I reside next year.

#### 7. Project Advisor (list the person's name, title, and contact information)

Dr. Jason Blackard, PhD, Associate Professor, blackajt@ucmail.uc.edu

## 8. Budget

The Budget is based off of last year's trip which was three weeks. Prices may fluctuate throughout the year based on the exchange rate of the US dollar and the Thai Baht.

Expenses (ordered by date of purchase)	Individual Costs for Participation	Explanation
Plane ticket (CVG to BKK)	\$2,000.00	I will book through Student Travel Agency (STA) so I will put down a \$350 deposit and pay off the rest
ISIC Card	\$25.00	STA will process this with no extra fee
Passport	\$135.00	26-page book and processing fee.
Immunizations	\$80.00	Required for the overnight stay in Pullman Hotel, off of Siem Square
Japanese Encephalitis	\$660.00	Two shots, 28 days apart, each \$330
Hepatitis A	\$180.00	Two shots, 6 months apart, each \$90
Typhoid	\$130.00	This is for the injection
Flu	\$30.00	One shot
Actual Visit to the doctor's office	\$30.00	This is with a discount because it is a service trip
Housing in Mae Sot	\$171.00	This is for 19 nights. It costs about \$9/person/night (250baht/person/night) at Phannu
Housing in BKK	\$37.50	This is for staying at Bangkok Garden Resort for 3 nights. \$12.50/person/night (362baht/person/night)
Plane ticket (BKK to Mae Sot)	\$60.00	These will be booked through nokair.com as early as possible for a good deal
Bus ticket (Mae Sot to BKK)	\$16.00	This is a first class day bus, which is the recommended form of bussing
Taxi from BKK airport to hotel	\$6.00	Equivalent to 700baht total
Taxi from hotel to Don Muang Airport	\$6.00	Equivalent to 700baht total.
Tuk Tuk to guest house from airport	\$2.00	Equivalent to 50baht/person
Taxi from BKK bus station to BKK Garden Resort	\$4.50	Equivalent to 500 baht total
Car from BKK Garden Resort to BKK airport	\$3.50	Equivalent to 400 baht total
Food	\$100.00	This is for 3 weeks if I spend 150baht/day
Donations	\$52.00	This is for customary charitbale donations for each location that we visit
Buying SAW Dinner	\$30.00	Equivalent to 3440 baht worth of food at the Jungle Restaurant.
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,758.50</b>	